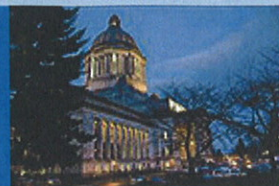


# HIGHER EDUCATION

## 21<sup>st</sup> Legislative District Town Hall



### Key Facts:

- Despite Washington's budget challenges – and in fact, because of them – higher education's role in helping our workers and our economy is more important than ever.
- Access to education is critical. Access means knowing what kinds of classes you need, where to go and how to pay for it. The state can, and must, help more students get a foot in the door of our college classrooms.
- We can use technology to transform our higher education system and help more students get the education they need for less money. This is a statewide approach to making smart use of shared technology and resources.

March 21, 2009

Due to the state's budget challenges, our state colleges and universities are facing significant cuts, and students will likely see a hike in tuition.

The irony is that rising unemployment is pushing more people to our colleges and universities at the very time those institutions are forced to scale back. This is particularly true at our two-year colleges where students and workers seek job-training and certification programs, or an affordable entry point to a four-year degree.

How can legislators balance the budget realities that mean fewer resources must go towards serving greater numbers of students?

### Link our higher education system to the needs of our economy

- Prioritize state dollars to emphasize college enrollments in programs for high-demand industries such as nursing and engineering – programs we know will prepare students for living-wage jobs.

### Give unemployed workers a chance to retool their skills and make themselves, and our state, more competitive

- Expand the worker-retraining program to focus new resources for community college programs in high-demand fields (allowing colleges to serve at least 6,200 more unemployed workers). *SB 5809*
- Expand the training benefits program that allows unemployed workers to receive unemployment benefits while training for new jobs and open the program to disabled workers, honorably discharged military personnel, and low-income workers. *HB 1906*
- Retain jobs by expanding access to the Customized Training Program to provide on-the-job training for middle-class workers. *SB 5616; SB 5554*

### Educate more students to higher levels

- Streamline existing financial aid programs and coordinate state grant and scholarship programs under the single brand of "Opportunity Grants." *HB 2021*
- Kick start higher education opportunities for younger students through programs like Running Start, College in the High School, Advanced Placement courses, and more. *HB 2119, HB 1986*
- Allow technical colleges to offer associate transfer degrees. *HB 1328/SB 5007*

### Save money and serve more students by transforming how we deliver education

- Radically improve use of shared technology including online eLearning, financial aid portals, library resources, web conferencing, and more. *HB 1946*

### Contact your legislators:

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